

SAFE WORK PRACTICES: COVID-19 AND FISHING VESSELS

The following document is a guide for a vessel master or owner to use during a crew safety orientation when discussing the COVID-19 virus with their crew on a fishing vessel.

According to the BC Centre for Disease Control (CDC) a new coronavirus is causing an outbreak of respiratory infections. It is vital for all employers' to provide information to their employees, how to protect themselves and their family and what to do if they suspect they may feel ill or sick.

What is Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses transmitted between humans and animals. The COVID-19 can cause illness ranging from a very mild, cold-like illness to severe lung infection. Symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, muscle ache, headache, and difficulty breathing (shortness of breath). The World Health Organization advises that symptoms may appear in 2 to 14 days after being exposed.

How is COVID-19 transmitted?

If a person carrying the virus sneezes, coughs, or exhales, respiratory droplets are released into the atmosphere and they may quickly land on nearby surfaces and/or another person. A worker may then touch contaminated surfaces or objects and then rub their eyes, nose, or mouth before washing.

The virus can be transmitted by:

- Breathing in droplets in the air that are generated when people cough or sneeze
- Close contact with other people (e.g. shaking hands or hugging)
- Touching contaminated surfaces and then touching the face, mouth, or food
- Touching contaminated surfaces and then touching another surface may cause the virus to transfer from one surface to another.

Currently, according to health experts, the virus is not known to be airborne (e.g. transmitted through the particles floating in the air) and it is not something that comes in through the skin.

Key Prevention Steps



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.



Cover your cough or sneeze with your elbow or a tissue. Throw tissue in the trash.



Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are frequently touched.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.



Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

**STAY HOME IF YOU
ARE SICK!**



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What else can we do?

The most important thing you can do to prevent infection is to wash your hands regularly and avoid touching your face.

To help reduce your risk of infection:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Using soap and water is the single most effective way of reducing the spread of infection. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Do not touch your face, eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with the crease of your elbow or tissue when you sneeze or cough.
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Do not share food, drinks, utensils, etc.
- Stay home if you feel you are sick and follow your employer's policy.
- Practice physical distancing (2 meters/6.5 feet of distance from other people as much as possible.)

How to stop the spread of viruses on a fishing vessel:

To prevent a disease or virus from spreading on a fishing vessel, take the following steps:

- Emphasize hand hygiene etiquette by all crew during safety orientations—lead by example, put up posters of proper hand washing techniques.
- Ensure that hand washing stations and alcohol-base hand sanitizers are on the fishing vessel and available for all crew.
- Ensure all shared spaces and non-porous tools are sanitized and cleaned regularly.
- Actively encourage sick employees to stay home.
- Do not permit anyone on board the vessel if;
 - They have had symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 10 days (fever, cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat)
 - They have travelled outside the country within the past 14 days
 - Live with or have been in close contact to someone with COVID-19 (presumed or confirmed) within the past 14 days.
- Perform environmental routine cleanings.
- Plan to minimize exposure between crew and the public, such as at fuel docks, loading and offloading sites, grocery stores, with dockside validators, truckers, packers, on grounds monitor and at sea samplers, etc. — follow social distancing procedures at all times whenever possible to do so.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

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When should you get medical advice?

If you have any symptoms, isolate yourself from others as quickly as possible. Immediately call a health care professional or Public Health Authority at 8-1-1. Describe your symptoms and travel history if applicable. Protect others from infection by washing your hands often and covering your mouth and nose, with your elbow, when coughing or sneezing.

Inform your employer and/or vessel master of your medical situation immediately after isolating yourself and seeking medical care.

You must stay home and self-isolate if you have symptoms of COVID-19, even if you are not tested. The BCCDC website or a health care provider can provide information on self-isolation.

For more information go to:

Get a medical self-assessment at: <https://ca.thrive.health/covid19/en>

The BC Centre of Disease Control (BCCDC) has a toll-free phone line for up-to-date information about COVID-19 including travel advice, social distancing recommendations and access to federal and provincial support and services. It is open from 7:30am to 8pm, 7 days a week. The number is **1-888-268-4319 (1-888-COVID19)**

Information on COVID-19 guidance in BC is available on the BCCDC website at:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>

Health Canada also has a website with guidance on COVID-19 available at:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>